

AMLÉ

Aontas na
Mac Léinn in Éirinn

NO FUNDING...



NO FUTURE

**Don't let history repeat itself, invest in
Further and Higher Education Today!**

NO FUNDING, NO FUTURE.

As President of Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ), I am honoured to present our Pre-Budget Submission for the coming year. This document is not just a collection of policy recommendations—it is a reflection of the real, lived experiences of students across Ireland. It is a call to action, urging the government to address the growing challenges that threaten the right to education for thousands of learners.

In recent years, the difficulties facing students have intensified to an unprecedented degree. The severe lack of affordable, safe, and accessible accommodation has left many in a state of constant uncertainty. Students are being forced to choose between continuing their education or securing basic living conditions—an impossible and unjust choice.

The situation is compounded by the rising cost of travel, particularly for students who must commute long distances due to the housing crisis. Public transport remains insufficient, expensive, and, in many areas, entirely unavailable—adding further financial and emotional strain. On top of this, Ireland continues to impose some of the highest third-level tuition fees in the EU, a barrier that excludes many capable students from the opportunities they deserve.

These are not isolated challenges. They are interlinked crises that demand an urgent, coordinated response.

These issues go beyond the individual. They threaten our national ambition for a fair, inclusive, and knowledge-driven society. When we fail to support students, we fail to invest in Ireland's future.

In this submission, AMLÉ calls on the government to act decisively and invest in the following areas:

A major expansion of affordable, purpose-built student accommodation, supported by public investment and regulated to ensure fair rents and quality standards.

A national overhaul of public transport for students, including more extensive routes, lower fares, and greater investment in rural connectivity.

A meaningful reduction in tuition fees, alongside a substantial increase in student financial supports, to ensure equitable access to education for all.

These are not unreasonable demands. They are essential steps toward protecting the right to education, tackling inequality, and unlocking the full potential of Ireland's future workforce and leaders.

Students are ready to contribute to a better, stronger Ireland. But we need the government to meet us with equal commitment. We urge our leaders to recognise the urgency of this moment—and to deliver a Budget that puts students first.

Together, we can ensure that no student is left behind.

Bryan O'Mahony, AMLÉ President 25/26



2026 Pre-Budget Submission

Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn, also known as AMLÉ, is the national representative body for third level students in the Republic of Ireland.

The asks outlined in our Pre Budget Submission represent the views of our members, as laid out by our most recent national congress, Comhdháil, which took place in April 2025.

In our submission, we are calling on the Government to properly invest in third level education. Better supports must be implemented for students learning in Ireland. These supports range from structural, with greater investment into student accommodation, to financial, with reform of the SUSI Grant system being a high priority of ours.




Our recommendations are outlined below.






ACCOMMODATION & TRANSPORT

Ask	Deliverable	Department
Gaeltacht Housing.	<p>A Housing Division in Údarás na Gaeltachta to facilitate, among other duties, a Population and Housing Strategy for each Gaeltacht Language Planning Area and to provide funding for said strategies.</p> <p>Reinstate a Gaeltacht housing grant scheme for the Gaeltacht community and for individuals with a B2 level of Irish who have completed FTCE.</p>	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Free/Reduced Cost Public Transport for Students.	Nationwide expansion of the TFI 90 Leap Card Zone.Free public transport for all people who carry a student/young adult Leap Card.	Department of Transport.
Purpose Built Student Accommodation.	Ability for all students to access Purpose Built Student Accommodation, either on campus or close to campus, fulfilling the 30,000 bed shortfall.	Department of Housing.

EQUALITY

 Ask	 Deliverable	 Department
Social Transition Fund.	Provision of funding for HEI's to establish Social Transition Funds for transgender and non-binary students to begin their social transition.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
LGBTQIA+ Medical Support.	Develop and implement a robust, accessible, and comprehensive model of care for trans individuals in line with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health standards of consultation with transgender and gender non-conforming people.	Department of Health.
Students Fleeing Conflict Zones.	Qualify students fleeing conflict zones under the free fees initiative. Implement further educational and wellbeing supports within HEIs for asylum seeker and refugee status students.	Department of Further, and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
Living Wage.	Increase minimum wage by €1.25 in Budget 2026 to bring minimum wage in line with the current National Average living wage and maintain deliverance of living wage in forthcoming budget cycles.	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Funding Irish Language Media.	In accordance with the program for government, to fund Raidió Rí-Rá to be on FM full-time.	Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.

EDUCATION AND COST OF COLLEGE

 Ask	 Deliverable	 Department
Permanent Contribution Fee Reduction.	Permanent reduction of fees by €1000 euro with a long-term plan of abolishment of contribution charges, as outlined in the Program for Government.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
Hidden Course Costs and Open Access.	Ensure that all additional costs needed to partake in a degree course would be transparently laid out, or absorbed into cost of fees. Ensure that Article Processing Charges are subsidised for postgraduate researchers, and that HEIs are adequately funded to access journals.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
Apprenticeship Costs.	Abolishment of the apprenticeship registration fee for the education phases of apprenticeships.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
Graduate Entry Degrees.	Reclassify Graduate Entry degrees under the Free Fees' Initiative.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
Graduate Entry Medicine (GEM).	GEM programme must be expanded, with additional funding to be provided to more rural-based universities so that they may offer GEM in an effort to address the shortage of doctors across Ireland, as laid out in the program for Government.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

EDUCATION AND COST OF COLLEGE

Ask	Deliverable	Department
Placement Students.	Develop and enact policy ensuring the payment of placement students. Develop a placement student payscale to be readily available alongside career standard, loosely following the current nursing student payscale.	Department of Social Protection.
Core Funding Gap.	Investment to address the core funding gap which currently exists in the sector.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
Increasing the Number of Irish Language Courses.	Funding for a national Irish language optional ad-on qualification tied to the CEFR in all courses Level 7 and above with the goal of creating as many B2-level speakers as possible. Establish a nationwide model of Irish-medium university education like the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in Wales and provide funding for each university to take part.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science.
Seimeastar Gaeltachta.	Seimeastar Gaeltachta to be expanded to all third level students who have the language as an aspect of their course, as well as expansion of the Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht to 12 weeks.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

POSTGRADUATE SUPPORTS

Ask	Deliverable	Department
Postgraduate Taught Supports.	Improved financial supports for postgraduate taught students in the form of greater availability of grants and scholarships, and putting in place fee controls and/or caps on postgraduate taught fees, for both EU and non-EU/EEA students.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
Postgraduate Researcher Supports.	All PhD researchers to be paid no less than €25,000, in line with the recommendations from the National Review of State Supports for PhD Researchers, with a view to granting PhD researchers full-time employee status of their respective institutions in order to match stipends to minimum wage.	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
International Postgraduate Supports (Non-EU/EEA).	Abolishment of the €300 fee for renewal of the Irish Residence Permit (IRP) to be waived by the Department/sponsored by research Bodies. Similarly, pathways to fund visas, Garda vetting, and other immigration costs should be introduced by research bodies and the Department. Hosting Agreement Schemes should be provided to non-EU postgraduate researchers to allow them to avail of a work permit and employment rights.	Department of Justice, Home Affairs, and Migration / Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

SUSI REFORM



AMLÉ is of the opinion that the Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) Grant is currently unfit for purpose. Major reform is needed to improve the system, and AMLÉ's intended reforms have been laid out in our SUSI Reform Paper, which can be found [here](#).

Our main asks include;

- ? Increase of Grant Threshold Rates
- ? Reform to the Adjacency Rates
- ? Reform of the Dependent Children Status
- ? Residency Criteria Reform

We are calling on the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to enact a complete overhaul of the system.



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